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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (presently amended) A needle assembly for a blood collection set comprising:

a hub having an inner tube and an outer tube surrounding said inner tube, each said tube of said hub having a proximal end and a distal end, said proximal ends of said inner and outer tubes being connected, said distal ends of said inner and outer tubes of said hub being spaced from one another such that a cylindrical space is defined between distal portions of said inner and outer tubes, said outer tube of said hub including a retaining aperture extending therethrough and into communication with said passage space;

a needle cannula having a proximal end rigidly connected to said distal end of said inner tube of said hub;

a shield telescoped within said cylindrical space of said hub and movable from a proximal position where said needle cannula is exposed to a distal position where said needle cannula is shielded, said shield comprising a resiliently deflectable finger projecting proximally and outwardly, said finger including an actuator engaging in said retaining aperture of said outer tube of said hub for retaining said shield in said proximal position; and

a spring disposed between the shield and the hub for urging said shield to said distal position, whereby inwardly directed forces on said actuator displaces said actuator from said retaining aperture of said outer tube and enables said spring to propel said shield to said distal position,

wherein in the initial state of the assembly prior to use, said cannula is exposed, said shield is located in said proximal position, and said assembly further comprises a safety cap disposed over at least a portion of the exposed needle cannula.

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2. (original) The needle assembly of Claim 1, wherein said resiliently deflectable finger comprises a proximal face dimensioned for engaging said outer tube at said distal end of said hub when said shield is in said distal position for preventing proximal movement of said shield relative to said hub.

3. (original) The needle assembly of Claim 1, wherein the outer tube of the hub includes a pair of resiliently deflectable radially extending wings for gripping and securing said needle assembly.

A 4. (original) The needle assembly of Claim 1, wherein the hub includes a proximal wall for connecting said inner and outer tubes, said spring comprising a coil spring having a proximal end engaged against the proximal wall of the hub and a distal end engaged against the shield.

5. (original) The needle assembly of Claim 4, wherein the shield has opposite proximal and distal ends, the distal end of the shield comprising an annular distal end wall extending inwardly for sliding contact with the inner tube of the hub, portions of the shield between the annular distal end wall and the proximal end of the shield being spaced radially outwardly from the inner tube of the hub, the distal end of the spring engaging the annular distal end wall of the shield, such that portions of said spring are disposed between said shield and said inner tube of said hub.

6. (original) The needle assembly of Claim 1, further comprising a flexible tube connected to the proximal end of the hub such that a passage through said tube communicates with the passage through the inner wall of the hub.
